



**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING AMENDED MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 11, 2023

**TIME: 6:30 P.M.**

**Via WebEX.com**

**MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

**Members Present:** Councilman Gene Nocera  
Councilman Ed McKeon  
Councilman Mike Marino

**Staff Present:** Christopher M. Holden, P.E., Director of Public Works  
Howard Weissberg, P.E., Deputy Director of Public Works  
Cathy Lechowicz, Director of Recreation  
Rohan Manning, Chief Management Analyst  
Mike Doherty- SLR

**Public:** Philip Nettis, Brian Kronenberger, Don Degennaro, Beth Williams, Jill Chase and Mark Fiderio

The meeting was called to order by Councilman Nocera at 6:30 p.m. Councilman Marino moved to approve the Meeting Minutes dated December 14, 2022. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Councilman Marino made a motion to amend the agenda to add Pameacha Avenue road closure as new business item b. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

Brian Kronenberger of 1480 Randolph Road stated that he wanted to follow through with the original comments about Old Road Drive last meeting. It's currently a private road. The residents of that road would like to understand the mechanics of going forward with their concerns and beyond the comments he had made last month, wanted to state there was a second fire in October in this neighborhood. There is not water in the area so it makes access by emergency vehicles very important. He also stated that the storm drainage that ends up partially up Old Road Drive is tied in by the City. Storm drains on Country Club and Stantack feed into the drainage system that goes behind a property along Country Club Road. The catch basin that is on Old Road Drive is higher than the grade so it floods. The road will flood if the drain is obstructed. The last thing he added was that the City had previously had plans to add a water tower off of Atkins Street. He would like to know what became of that plan.

Jill Chase of 37 Old Road Drive stated that she is requesting it be deemed a public road or that the road be maintained by the City to safety standards as is done with adjoining roads Country Club, Stantack Road, Footit Drive and Old Farms West. She states that there continues to be financial inequities for the residents of Old Road Drive as they pay out of pocket for street maintenance and continue to pay City



and Fire Tax. She mirrored concerns Mr. Kronenberger stated including safety and drainage issues. Additional issues with the streets electrical needs and tree maintenance need to be addressed.

Philip Nettis of 149 Dripps Rd shared that he met with Deputy Director Weissberg. He stated that a fire truck recently could not make it up his road when 911 was called.

Don Degennaro of 148 Old Road Drive is a neighbor of Mr. Bennett, whose home burned down last year. The residents of that street feel that something does need to be done to assure safety of the street. He almost lost his home too as the Fire Department had a hard time accessing the road during the fire that burned down Mr. Bennett's home. The Fire Department did the best they could to keep up with the fire but the closest hydrants are a mile away. He stated that there are several elderly people that rely on being able to access emergency services through an ambulance.

Beth Williams of 171 Old Road Drive stated that she is the farthest house from the mailboxes on Country Club Road. She stated that if her home were to ever catch on fire they wouldn't be able to get up the road before it burned to the ground. As it stands in an emergency situation where the fire department needs to respond the fire trucks stay on the street on Country Club Road and a supervisor comes up the road to assess the situation before any trucks come up the hill. This can result in a delay to response time. She stated that she is under the impression that when originally asked the Fire Chief or Marshall stated that they would not have an issue with fighting a fire up there. She stated that any service truck have a hard time getting up the road. She states that as it is a private road and she owns property, if a member of the public comes onto the road, which they do to ride bikes and walk dogs, and is injured, she would be partially liable for damages. She stated in years past her and her husband would put 5-10 tons of asphalt down to patch the road. She states she feels short changed and now that she is older she can't run fast enough to beat a fire if something were to happen. She stated that if Stantack is maintained, as is a building that technically sits on Meriden property and does not pay Middletown taxes, this road should be maintained as well.

Mark Fiderio of 159 Old Road Drive stated that they are asking for road maintenance, especially in the winter, as the city has the equipment to be able to do so much more easily.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Not discussed

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Meeting Schedule- Director Holden shared that the meeting schedule will keep the Public Works Commission meeting at the normal scheduled dates and times for the 2023 year. Councilman Marino made a motion to accept the schedule. Councilman McKeon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
- b. Pameacha Avenue Road Closure- Councilman Marino questioned whether Pameacha Road would be shut down with jersey barriers at either end. Director Holden stated that it is the case and that it is due to a significant disruption due to a sewer line that is going in. Eventually there will be additional drainage and reconstruction performed. Deputy Director Weissberg stated there is a detailed detour plan outlined in the project. Councilman Marino questioned why the normal procedure of metal plates



being put down to allow access of vehicles isn't being done in this case. Director Holden stated that plates in the road during the winter time can affect plowing efforts and cause significant issues. The road closure has been coordinated with emergency services. Parking issues related to this project have been worked out.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**a. Monarca Drive** – Deputy Director Weissberg stated that the Chief Engineer has been looking at grading requirements that would bring the road up to City standards in addition to developing the turning templates for vehicles for the horizontal curve. There are steep grades on both sides of the street which make it a challenge. Councilman McKeon asked if there could be a little report on how we are doing on finding the appropriate staff for the Public Works Department. Director Holden stated that there used to be an Assistant Chief Engineer but it doesn't exist anymore. There have been attempts to add it to the budget in previous years but it had not been approved.

**b. Dog Park Update-** Deputy Director Weissberg stated that they have done a deep dive into the dog park committee possibility, including the potential of an ad hoc committee and it would require the creation of an ordinance and have it passed. It is recommended that the dog park stay as a standing item on the agenda under the Public Works Commission. This would allow things to go much quicker than to go through the committee process.

**c. Recreation Center Update** – Director Holden stated the floor in the pool and some small punch list items need to be done. Director Lechowicz shared that they are up and running with some activities during their soft opening.

**d. Veterans Pool and Splash Pad Update** – Director Holden stated that the pool is in. Work is being done on retaining walls. Interior work continues including building walls.

**e. Saybrook Rd/ Dripps Rd Update-** Deputy Director Weissberg shared he met with Mr. Nettis in the field. He stated that drainage issues on Saybrook Road need to be addressed. He stated that the Police Department approved signage for Dripps Road as a no parking beyond this point, roughly 180 feet in. Concepts are being drafted to possibly help alleviate some of the drainage issues.

**f. Old Road Drive Update-** Director Holden stated that in August of 2021 was when this issue originally been brought to the Public Works Commission for review. The Chief Engineer had, at that time, come up with reconstruction of the road. As it is, it does not meet City standards. Test pits have not been done at this time. The cost has not been updated but back in August of 2021 it was estimated that it would cost over \$1 million to bring the road up to City standards. Developers are the biggest beneficiaries to developing private streets as they do not have to meet City standards and the City has no control over how they develop the areas. The commission at that time did not take action to make it a City street. Councilman Marino asked what the next step would be to see if this could become a City street. Director Holden said that the Public Works Commission would need to endorse it and it would then go to the Common Council for review. He shared again that it would cost a significant amount of money to bring it up to City standards and if it were to be accepted and not brought up to standards the City would be liable in the event something happened. There would be a whole legal process to establish where the road goes. Councilman McKeon stated he feels that we need to work with the Planning Department



about private roads because that is where the root of the problem is. He also stated that he thinks there needs to be a plan because there are safety and health liabilities in regards to these properties. Councilman Nocera asked that the City Engineer do a new assessment to see what it would cost to bring Old Road Drive to City standards. Councilman McKeon made a motion and Councilman Marino seconded it. There was no objection. Director Holden stated that the City Engineer does have a plan for this and it will be reviewed for the next meeting. The councilman requested that City legal counsel be present at the next meeting to discuss this process. Councilman McKeon made a motion to organize a meeting with the Planning Department to discuss how to address these issues. Councilman Marino seconded the motion. There was no objection and the motion passed. This will be a standing agenda item.

**OTHER: Reported on by Christopher Holden**

- a. Department Updates- OT was used for snow clearing and salting. There was some OT for leaves.
- b. December 2022 Monthly Report - Highway Division- Nothing additional to OT report.
- c. December 2022 Monthly Report - Parks Division – Parks does have an underground storage tank that sucked in some water. The tank will be removed.
- d. December 2022 Public Works Overtime Report- Nothing additional to department update.
- e. December 2022 Building Permits – \$681,000 in Building Permits. There have been some large projects for Wesleyan ongoing.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**Adjourn** – As there were no further questions the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.